A History of South Carolina

Ephyia Publishing

Table of Contents

- **Introduction**
- **Chapter 1** The Land and Its First Peoples
- **Chapter 2** European Exploration and Early Colonization Attempts
- **Chapter 3** The English Settlement and the Lords Proprietors
- **Chapter 4** The Rise of the Plantation Economy: Rice and Indigo
- **Chapter 5** The Yamasee War and the Transition to a Royal Colony
- **Chapter 6** Life in Colonial South Carolina: Society and Culture
- **Chapter 7** The Regulator Movement and Backcountry Tensions
- **Chapter 8** The Road to Revolution: Resistance to British Rule
- **Chapter 9** The Revolutionary War in South Carolina: A Bitter Civil War
- **Chapter 10** Forging a New State: From Articles of Confederation to the Constitution
- **Chapter 11** The Antebellum Era: Cotton, Slavery, and States' Rights
- **Chapter 12** The Nullification Crisis and the Rise of Sectionalism
- **Chapter 13** Secession: The First to Leave the Union
- **Chapter 14** The Civil War Begins: The Firing on Fort Sumter
- **Chapter 15** The War at Home: Blockade, Battles, and Sherman's March
- **Chapter 16** Reconstruction and Its Aftermath
- **Chapter 17** The "Redeemers" and the Rise of Jim Crow
- **Chapter 18** The Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries: Agrarian Revolt and Industrialization
- **Chapter 19** The Progressive Era and World War I
- **Chapter 20** The 1920s and the Great Depression
- **Chapter 21** World War II and the Post-War Boom
- **Chapter 22** The Civil Rights Movement in South Carolina
- **Chapter 23** Economic Transformation: From Textiles to Modern Manufacturing
- **Chapter 24** Political Shifts: The Rise of the Republican Party
- **Chapter 25** South Carolina in the 21st Century: Challenges and Opportunities
- **Afterword**

INTRODUCTION

South Carolina. The very name conjures a host of images, a montage of the American South both real and imagined. It is a land of languid heat and moss-draped oaks, of stately Charleston homes with their hidden gardens and piazzas, and of a coastline

Purchased from MixCache.com - The Online eBook Marketplace

that stretches from the lively Grand Strand to the serene Sea Islands. It is the sweetgrass basket, the sizzle of shrimp and grits, and the distinctive Gullah dialect that carries echoes of West Africa. But beyond these popular impressions lies a history as complex and turbulent as any in the nation, a story of immense wealth and grinding poverty, of brutal oppression and a relentless struggle for freedom, of profound conservatism and surprising rebellion. This is the story of a place that has, from its very inception, been a crucible of the American experience, a stage upon which the great dramas of the nation's founding, its near-dissolution, and its ongoing quest for a more perfect union have been enacted with particular ferocity.

To understand South Carolina is to understand a state of profound contradictions. It was a place founded on the ideals of liberty, at least for a select few, while simultaneously building an economy almost entirely dependent on the stolen labor of enslaved Africans. It was a cradle of American patriotism, sending delegates to the Continental Congress and sacrificing dearly in the Revolutionary War, yet it would later become the wellspring of secession, the first state to tear itself from the Union in a defiant and ultimately catastrophic bid to preserve its "peculiar institution." It is a state that has produced both revered statesmen and fiery demagogues, a place of deep religious conviction that has also been the scene of some of the nation's most shocking acts of violence. Its history is not a simple, linear progression, but a tangled web of competing interests, conflicting ideologies, and a constant negotiation of what it means to be a South Carolinian, and by extension, an American.

This book will endeavor to unravel that tangled web, to trace the long and often winding path that has led South Carolina from its pre-colonial wilderness to its present-day status as a hub of modern manufacturing and a perennial political battleground. Our journey will begin long before the first European ships sighted its shores, with the land itself and the diverse native peoples who called it home for millennia. We will explore their complex societies, their relationship with the environment, and the cataclysmic impact of the arrival of outsiders. From there, we will witness the halting first steps of colonization, the failed attempts by the Spanish and French to gain a foothold, and the eventual success of the English in establishing a permanent settlement at Charles Town in 1670.

The story of colonial South Carolina is in many ways the story of two crops: rice and indigo. These commodities, cultivated in the swampy Lowcountry by a vast and ever-growing enslaved workforce, would generate fabulous wealth for a small planter elite, transforming Charles Town into one of the richest and most cosmopolitan cities in British North America. We will examine the intricate workings of this plantation economy, the development of a unique and brutal system of slavery, and the emergence of a society starkly divided by race and class. But the colony was not a monolith. Beyond the coastal plain, the backcountry was a rough-and-tumble world of small farmers, hunters, and traders, a region with its own distinct culture and grievances, which would periodically erupt in violence and social unrest.

Purchased from MixCache.com - The Online eBook Marketplace

As the 18th century progressed, the ties that bound South Carolina to Great Britain began to fray. We will follow the colony's journey from loyal subject to revolutionary hotbed, exploring the economic and political disputes that fueled the flames of rebellion. The Revolutionary War in South Carolina was no distant affair of professional armies, but a brutal and intensely personal civil war that pitted neighbor against neighbor, family against family. The state would see more battles and skirmishes than any other, with over 200 battles fought within its borders, and its contributions to the Patriot cause would be immense, though they would come at a terrible cost.

In the wake of independence, South Carolina would play a pivotal role in the shaping of the new nation, its leaders fiercely defending the interests of the South in the debates over the Constitution. The antebellum era that followed was a period of continued economic prosperity, but also one of growing sectional tension. As the nation expanded westward, the issue of slavery became increasingly contentious, and South Carolina would consistently place itself at the forefront of the states' rights movement, articulating a political philosophy that would ultimately lead to disunion. The Nullification Crisis of the 1830s was a dress rehearsal for the far greater conflict to come, a moment when the state, under the ideological sway of figures like John C. Calhoun, openly defied the federal government.

The decision to secede in December 1860 was the culmination of decades of escalating strife. South Carolina, in its own view, was making a stand for liberty and self-determination; in the eyes of the Union, it was an act of treason. The first shots of the Civil War, fired on Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor, were fired by South Carolinians, a symbolic act that plunged the nation into its bloodiest conflict. We will chart the course of the war within the state, from the initial euphoria of secession to the grim realities of the Union blockade, the devastation of coastal regions, and the final, crushing blow of General William T. Sherman's march through the heart of the state.

The end of the Civil War brought not peace, but a new and equally challenging era of Reconstruction. For a brief and tumultuous period, African Americans in South Carolina, now free from bondage, would exercise a newfound political power, participating in government and striving to build new lives for themselves. This experiment in interracial democracy, however, would be short-lived. We will examine the violent backlash from white society, the rise of paramilitary groups like the Ku Klux Klan, and the eventual "redemption" of the state by white Democrats who would systematically disenfranchise African Americans and implement the rigid system of segregation known as Jim Crow.

The late 19th and early 20th centuries were a time of profound change for South Carolina. The agrarian economy of the past began to give way to industrialization, with textile mills sprouting up across the Piedmont, offering new opportunities but also new

Purchased from MixCache.com - The Online eBook Marketplace

forms of exploitation. We will explore the social and political upheavals of this era, from the Populist revolt of farmers against the entrenched political establishment to the stirrings of the Progressive movement and the impact of the First World War. The 1920s brought a fleeting prosperity for some, followed by the economic devastation of the Great Depression, a period of immense hardship that would be alleviated in part by the massive federal programs of the New Deal.

The Second World War would prove to be a major turning point in the state's history, accelerating the modernization of its economy and society. The post-war years witnessed a continuation of this economic boom, but also the dawn of a new struggle for civil rights. We will document the courageous efforts of African American activists in South Carolina to dismantle the edifice of Jim Crow, from the landmark legal challenges that originated in the state to the sit-ins, marches, and voter registration drives that would ultimately transform the political landscape.

In the latter half of the 20th century, South Carolina's economy underwent a dramatic transformation. The once-dominant textile industry declined, to be replaced by a more diversified economy based on modern manufacturing, tourism, and international trade. This economic shift was accompanied by a political realignment, as the state, once a bastion of the Democratic Party, became a stronghold of the Republican Party. We will analyze the forces behind these changes and their impact on the state's social and cultural fabric.

Finally, we will bring our story into the 21st century, examining the challenges and opportunities that South Carolina faces in the present day. These include the ongoing debates over the state's historical symbols, the challenges of providing quality education and healthcare to all its citizens, and the opportunities presented by a growing and increasingly diverse population.

This history of South Carolina is not intended to be a simple celebration of its past, nor a wholesale condemnation of it. It is, rather, an attempt to understand the complexities of that past in all its dimensions, to acknowledge the achievements and the failures, the moments of great nobility and the moments of profound shame. It is a story of a people and a place that have been shaped by the currents of history, but who have also, in turn, left an indelible mark on the history of the nation. By exploring this rich and often-contentious past, we can perhaps gain a better understanding of the South Carolina of today, and of the enduring questions of identity, race, and power that continue to shape the American experiment.

CHAPTER ONE: The Land and Its First Peoples

Purchased from MixCache.com - The Online eBook Marketplace

Before there was South Carolina, there was the land, a long-unwritten scroll of geological time telling a story of continental collisions, ancient mountain ranges, and the slow, persistent work of water. To understand the human history that would unfold here, one must first appreciate the stage on which it was set. The state is a varied terrain, sloping gently from the mountains to the sea, a topography that would profoundly shape the lives of those who came to inhabit it. Geologists divide the state into three distinct provinces: the Blue Ridge, the Piedmont, and the Coastal Plain. Each possesses a unique character, a different feel underfoot, and a distinct endowment of resources that dictated where and how people would live for millennia.

The Blue Ridge, a rugged sliver in the state's northwestern corner, is the eroded remnant of a once-mighty mountain system, pushed up by the tectonic grinding of continents hundreds of millions of years ago. Its steep slopes, cloaked in dense hardwood forests, are scored by fast-running streams that tumble down toward the rolling hills of the Piedmont. This second region, the Piedmont, constitutes the heart of the state, a broad plateau of ancient, hard crystalline rock. Its name, meaning "foot of the mountain," aptly describes its topography of rolling hills and broad river valleys. Here, the great rivers of South Carolina—the Savannah, the Santee, the Pee Dee—begin their journey in earnest, carving their paths through the red clay soil that is the region's hallmark. The boundary between the hard rock of the Piedmont and the softer sediments of the coast is marked by the Fall Line, a zone of rapids and waterfalls where rivers make their final, energetic descent. This geological feature would one day determine the locations of cities, marking the head of navigation for colonial-era boats.

Finally, comprising nearly two-thirds of the state, is the Coastal Plain. This vast, low-lying expanse is a creation of the ocean, a series of terraces built up over millions of years by the unconsolidated sediments—sands, clays, and limestone—deposited as the sea advanced and retreated. The landscape here is flatter, the rivers more sluggish and meandering, winding through extensive swamps and marshes. The coast itself is a dynamic filigree of barrier islands, tidal estuaries, and salt marshes, a profoundly rich ecosystem that would prove to be both a source of immense sustenance and a formidable challenge to human settlement.

The first humans to set foot on this land arrived in a world very different from that of today. During the last Ice Age, a time known as the Paleoindian period (roughly 13,000 to 8,000 B.C.), the climate was cooler, resembling modern-day New York, and the coastline lay much farther out to sea, as much of the world's water was locked up in massive glaciers. These first South Carolinians were nomadic hunters and gatherers, moving in small bands across a landscape populated by now-extinct megafauna like mammoths, mastodons, and saber-toothed tigers. Their presence is known to us primarily through their distinctive stone spear points, particularly the fluted "Clovis" points, masterpieces of flintknapping found scattered across the state, silent testaments to a long and distant past.

Purchased from MixCache.com - The Online eBook Marketplace

As the glaciers retreated and the climate warmed, the big game animals disappeared, and the people adapted. The Archaic Period (8,000 to 1,000 B.C.) saw a shift toward a more generalized hunting and gathering lifestyle. People began to exploit a wider variety of resources, hunting smaller game like white-tailed deer, fishing in the increasingly abundant rivers, and gathering a broad array of wild plants, nuts, and shellfish. This era was marked by important innovations, including the development of the atlatl, or spear-thrower, which increased the range and power of their hunting weapons. Toward the end of the Archaic period, around 3,000 B.C., some of the most significant developments occurred along the coast: the creation of tribal societies, the invention of pottery, and the construction of mysterious shell rings. These large circular earthworks, composed of oyster and clam shells, are unique to the southeastern coast and likely served as centers for seasonal gatherings, ceremonies, and feasting.

The succeeding Woodland Period (1,000 B.C. to 900 A.D.) witnessed a growing trend toward a more settled existence. Pottery became more widespread and sophisticated, allowing for better food storage and cooking. Semi-permanent villages began to appear, and while hunting and gathering remained crucial, the deliberate cultivation of plants marked the beginnings of agriculture. The bow and arrow, a significant technological advancement in hunting, were introduced during this time. A more complex ceremonial life is evident from the construction of earthen burial mounds, a practice that would become more elaborate in the centuries to come.

The final chapter of South Carolina's pre-contact history is the Mississippian Period (900 A.D. to 1500 A.D.). This era saw the rise of complex, chiefdom-level societies, particularly along the major river valleys. Life was organized around large, permanent towns, often fortified with defensive palisades. The cornerstone of the Mississippian way of life was intensive agriculture, centered on the "three sisters"—corn, beans, and squash—which were grown together in a mutually beneficial system. This reliable food source supported larger populations and allowed for a more complex social structure, with a clear hierarchy of chiefs, priests, and commoners. The most visible legacy of the Mississippian culture is the great earthen mounds they built. These were not for burial, but were flat-topped platform mounds upon which temples, council houses, or the residences of chiefs were built, tangible symbols of political and religious power. Important mound sites, such as the one at Town Creek in neighboring North Carolina and those found along the Wateree and Santee rivers, were part of a wider cultural phenomenon that stretched across the Southeast, connected by extensive trade networks.

By the time the first Europeans arrived, South Carolina was home to a diverse array of native peoples, speaking languages belonging to at least four major families: Siouan, Iroquoian, Muskogean, and Algonquian. It was not an empty wilderness, but a landscape shaped by millennia of human activity, a mosaic of towns, fields, and

Purchased from MixCache.com - The Online eBook Marketplace

hunting grounds supporting tens of thousands of people.

In the mountainous northwest lived the Cherokee. An Iroquoian-speaking people, their oral traditions tell of a migration from the Great Lakes region in ancient times. They were the largest and most powerful single nation in the Southeast, with dozens of towns scattered throughout the southern Appalachians. The Cherokee towns in what is now Upstate South Carolina were known as the "Lower Towns," situated at a lower elevation than their heartland in the mountains of North Carolina and Tennessee. They were a mountain people, living in settled villages and practicing a mix of agriculture and hunting. Their society was matrilineal, meaning that kinship and property were traced through the mother's line.

Occupying the Piedmont region, especially along the river that now bears their name, were the Catawba. A Siouan-speaking people, they called themselves *yeh is-WAH h'reh*, or "people of the river." At the time of European contact, their population may have been as high as 15,000 to 25,000. They were skilled farmers and formidable warriors, living in fortified villages with bark-covered cabins. The Catawba were also renowned for their distinctive pottery, a tradition that continues to this day. Their strategic location in the Piedmont allowed them to control important trading paths, making them a significant power in the region.

The coastal plains and sea islands were home to a variety of smaller, distinct groups. South of the Santee River, stretching down toward the Savannah River, lived a loose confederation of tribes known collectively as the Cusabo. This group included the Kiawah, the Stono, the Edisto, and others who occupied the lands around what would become Charleston. They were a maritime people, their lives intimately tied to the rhythms of the tides and the bounty of the estuaries. They fished, hunted deer, and cultivated gardens. Their language is poorly documented but appears to have been distinct from the major language families of their inland neighbors.

Further south, near the Savannah River, were the Yamasee. They were a multiethnic confederation, an amalgamation of remnants of other tribes, primarily of Muskogean stock, who had moved into the area from present-day Georgia and Florida. They were relative newcomers to the region, having established themselves in the contested borderlands between the English and Spanish spheres of influence in the late 17th century.

Numerous other groups, such as the Pee Dee, the Waccamaw, and the Santee, also inhabited the coastal plain, each with their own territory and traditions. These were not monolithic entities but collections of villages and chiefdoms, connected by alliances, rivalries, and trade. They lived in a world where the spiritual and the physical were deeply intertwined, where order was valued and chaos seen as a source of harm. Village priests practiced ritual healing, believing that the body and spirit were linked and must be healed together. Life revolved around the agricultural seasons,

Purchased from MixCache.com - The Online eBook Marketplace

punctuated by communal ceremonies, dances, and ball games that reinforced social bonds and religious beliefs. This was the world that existed on the eve of European arrival—a complex, dynamic, and ancient society, deeply rooted in the soil and waters of the land that would one day be called South Carolina.

This is a sample preview. Purchase the book to read the full content.

Visit MixCache.com to purchase the complete book.

Purchased from MixCache.com - The Online eBook Marketplace